DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 352 316 SP 034 067

AUTHOR Hinz, Lisa; And Others
TITLE A Survey of Parent Involvement Course Offerings in Minnesota's Undergraduate Teacher Preparation Programs.
PUB DATE Apr 92
NOTE 21p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Course Descriptions; *Education Courses; Education Majors; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; *Parent Participation; Parent Teacher Cooperation; Preservice Teacher Education; School Catalogs; School Surveys; *Teacher Education Programs
IDENTIFIERS *Minnesota

ABSTRACT

This survey of Minnesota colleges of education describes the availability of courses for prospective teachers which promote greater parental involvement in elementary and secondary schools. Survey results are based on information in course catalogs for the 1991-92 academic year in the 27 Minnesota colleges and universities offering a degree program in education. Findings indicate that despite extensive research showing the need for and positive impact of parent involvement on student learning, the undergraduate teacher preparation programs currently offered in Minnesota do not appear to respond to this need. Less than half of the 27 teacher preparation programs in the state offer courses that focus on helping future teachers learn to involve parents as active partners in the teaching of their children. Three course descriptions illustrate the types of courses identified as parent involvement courses emphasizing the ways future K-12 teachers can increase the active role of parents in their children's education. Two appendices are included: the first lists parent involvement courses offered at the colleges and universities surveyed; the second details the courses in the first appendix using course descriptions from the college or university's most recent catalog. (LL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED352316

A Survey of Parent Involvement Course Offerings In Minnesota's Undergraduate Teacher Preparation Programs

by Lisa Hinz[1], Jessica Clarke[2] and Joe Nathan[3]

April, 1992

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

L. Hinz

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Draft Research Report

[1]Lisa Hinz is a graduate research assistant with the Center for School Change, Humphrey Institute, and will complete her Masters' degree in December, 1992.

[2]Jessica Clarke is a 1991 graduate of the Humphrey Institute, and was research assistant for the Center for School Change during the 1990-91 academic year. She prepared a preliminary draft of this report in June, 1991.

[3]Joe Nathan is director of the Center for School Change.

Center for School Change, Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota, 301 19th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55455. (612) 626-1834.
The Center for School Change is funded by the Blandin Foundation.

SP034067

 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Executive Summary

This survey of Minnesota colleges of education describes the availability of courses for prospective teachers which promote greater parental involvement in elementary and secondary schools. Parent involvement courses are those that focus on ways that teachers can work more effectively with parents --as partners-- to improve students' learning in grades K-12. Despite extensive research that shows the need for and positive impact of parent involvement on student learning, the undergraduate teacher preparation programs currently offered in Minnesota do not appear to respond to this need. Our research found:

1. Of the 27 colleges and universities in Minnesota offering undergraduate education programs, more than half offer no courses related to parent involvement for prospective teachers of grades K-12.
2. Courses emphasizing special education and early childhood education make up the majority of courses that refer to parents; many may actually teach parenting and child rearing skills rather than ways for elementary and secondary teachers to establish partnerships with parents.
3. Only eight of the hundreds of courses offered in undergraduate teacher education programs clearly focus on increasing the active role of all parents for the benefit of K-12 students' learning.
4. Only one college or university appears to require a course focusing on parent-educator partnerships; when other post-secondary institutions offer such courses, they are electives.
5. Very few of the classes we identified describe any direct interaction between parents and prospective teachers.
6. While all of the state universities offer parent involvement courses, such courses are less available at the University of Minnesota and at private colleges and universities.

Acknowledgements

This report is intended to find the extent to which Minnesota's colleges and universities offer courses focusing on ways prospective teachers can increase the active role of parents in K-12 students' learning.

We are indebted to the education departments and admissions offices of the 27 Minnesota's colleges and universities which offer undergraduate teacher preparation programs. They provided us with their most recent catalogs and course listings.

The assistance of Sue Finnegan and Betty Radcliffe in gathering the materials for this study and providing editorial oversight is much appreciated.

The Center for School Change was established by a major grant from the Blandin Foundation to the University of Minnesota's Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. In creating the Center, Blandin Foundation president, Paul Olson noted: "This is not a grant about educational theory. We want to help educators and communities build new, more effective educational programs." We deeply appreciate the Blandin Foundation's support and vision for more learning and better schools.

We regard this report as a preliminary look at parental involvement as a focus of study for prospective teachers. We would be delighted to receive reader's reactions and corrections. This draft will be updated with a look at parental involvement offerings on the graduate level, for both teachers and administrators.

The Humphrey Institute of the University of Minnesota is hospitable to a diversity of opinions and aspirations. The Institute does not itself take positions on issues of public policy. The contents of this report are the responsibility of the authors.

The University of Minnesota is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities and employment without regard to race, religion, color, sex, national origin, handicap, age, veteran status or sexual orientation.

Introduction

Educators and researchers agree: greater parent involvement produces increased student achievement, along with better attitudes toward teachers and school. A variety of studies point out ways that educators can promote more involvement by parents. But often teachers and administrators are not sure what they can and should do to make parents active partners in students' education.

This survey was conducted to identify the parent involvement courses currently available at colleges and universities in Minnesota offering undergraduate programs in education. Parent involvement courses are those that focus on ways that teachers can work more effectively with parents --as partners-- to improve students' learning in grades K-12.

Extensive research suggests that greater parent involvement helps improve students' achievement in school. Do educators think parent involvement is important? Instructor, a magazine read by several hundred thousand elementary school teachers, asked its subscribers to name the one thing they would like to tell national policymakers about raising student achievement. The most popular answer was "more parent involvement."(Instructor, 1986).

After reviewing more than 2,500 studies from urban, suburban, and rural areas, University of Illinois professor Herbert Walberg concluded:

> Extensive evidence suggests that the efficiency of the home in fostering learning has declined for several decades, but cooperative partnerships between the home and the school can dramatically raise educational productivity. (Walberg, 1984).

James Comer has also demonstrated how creating greater parent-teacher cooperation produces significant achievement gains, along with better student attendance and behavior. Comer's approach is being adopted in a number of school districts around the country. (Comer, 1988).

A 1989 national Gallup poll of teachers asked: "what do you think are the biggest problems with which the public schools in this community must deal?" The most frequently cited answer, given by 34% of the teachers, was "parents' lack of interest/ support." (Elam, 1989).

If parent involvement is important, is there anything educators can do to promote it? Dr. Joyce Epstein studied elementary and middle schools in eight urban areas. She found that the best predictor of parent involvement was not socioeconomic status. The best predictor of parent involvement was what educators did to encourage it:

> The data are clear that the school's practices to inform and to involve parents are more important than parent education, family size, marital status, and even grade level in determining whether inner-city parents get involved with their childrens' education in elementary school and stay involved through middle school. (Epstein, 1989:10).

Given these conclusions, shouldn't all prospective teachers be expected to carefully study and develop skills to promote parent involvement? We think the answer is "Yes."

We surveyed 27 different colleges and universities in Minnesota offering undergraduate degree programs in education. Course offerings and requirements are expected to represent what each institution, college, or department views as essential in the training of future teachers. Staff at the Center for School Change undertook this survey expecting that many of the colleges and universities would include courses

designed to promote parent involvement given these research findings. Indeed, we thought many institutions would require such courses. While the Center for School Change does not believe that there is only one means for schools and teachers to achieve this important objective, college coursework is one major way to communicate the importance of and skills to encourage parent involvement.

Course listings from these colleges and universities reveal great variety in programs. However, most of the variety did not include courses in parent involvement. Less than half of the 27 teacher preparation programs in the state offer any courses that focus on helping future teachers learn to involve parents as active partners in the teaching of their children. Further, of those classes that do focus on parent involvement, approximately 70% are specifically for special education and early childhood and parent education students.

Promising Examples

The following course descriptions illustrate the types of courses that the Center for School Change identifies as parent involvement courses. While there are limits to definitive judgements on the basis of course titles and brief descriptions alone, the following examples appear to stress the kind of knowledge and skills teachers need to encourage more active parent-teacher partnerships.

Teacher-Parent Relationships in Education of the Child
Emphasis on parent-teacher-child relationships for effective learning of children through the elementary grades. (Mankato State)

Survey of Families and Parent Involvement
In-depth study of parent-child relations, family development, parent involvement in their child's education process, development of student skills and sensitivities in understanding parent programs and working with parents in the home. (St. Cloud State)

Parent and Professional Planning for Handicapped Students
Study and demonstrations of constructive approaches to cooperative planning and implementation of education programs by parents, teachers and persons involved with children who have special needs. (University of Minnesota)

The courses cited above clearly emphasize the ways future K-12 teachers can increase the active role of parents in their childrens' education. Identifying such courses at teacher preparation programs in Minnesota is the focus of our survey.

Research Methods

This research was conducted to give educators and policy-makers in Minnesota concrete information about the courses being offered and required at colleges and universities. Course catalogs for the current 1991-92 year were requested from the admissions offices at the 27 colleges and universities in Minnesota offering a degree program in education: current year information was obtained for all but two. Survey results were based on these materials.

Center for School Change staff read the course descriptions listed under each school's department of education. Courses defined as parent involvement courses include those that target the training of teachers for grades K-12 and that focus on the development of skills for involving parents as active partners in their children's education. Courses that appear to teach parenting or early childhood education were included but are categorized separately because they appear to address child rearing skills and

education outside the K-12 grades.

The colleges and universities surveyed and their courses on parent involvement are listed in Appendix 1. "Courses in Parent Involvement". Each course is categorized as either parent involvement (PI), special education, or early childhood and family education (ECFE) based on the course description and the definitions outlined above. Appendix 2. details the courses in appendix 1 using the course description from the college or university's most recent catalog.

Research Limitations

This survey primarily concentrated on the type and frequency of courses promoting parent involvement at the colleges and universities in Minnesota offering undergraduate teacher preparation programs.

This research assumes that course catalogs provide some information about the content of the classes. Course descriptions and titles may not adequately reflect the material being taught in the classrooms. No effort was made to contact the instructors or observe the classes at the colleges and universities surveyed.

We recognize that some courses may discuss ways to promote parent involvement, even if the subject is not included in the course description. However, given the importance both practicing educators and researchers place on this subject, we believe it deserves to be the focus of a course.

The sole objective of this report is inform individuals about the courses being offered that help prospective teachers learn about parent involvement. This study does

not examine the quality of instruction at the colleges and universities. The conclusions and appendices are not designed to evaluate the overall education at any particular schools. The study's intention is not to promote one school over another.

Conclusions

A small number of courses are offered that focus on parent involvement at Minnesota colleges and universities. Of the 27 colleges and universities in Minnesota offering licensed degree programs, over half offer no courses at all related to parent involvement for prospective teachers of grades K-12.

Of the parent involvement courses being taught in Minnesota's teacher preparation programs, less than 30% of these classes focus specifically on helping K-12 educators learn to increase parents involvement in their childrens' education. An additional 30% of the parent involvement courses we identified are designed primarily for educators working with special education students. The remaining 40% of courses we identified appear to target early childhood education and parenting skills rather than promoting parent-teacher partnership for teachers of grades K-12.

Of all the courses in parent involvement, very few list any direct contact with parents. Thus, not only are few students learning about parent involvement, only a small number of classes are designed to bring students into direct contact with parents and their attitudes about their children's education. Developing the skills and understanding necessary to build working relationships with parents does not appear to be a central part of training teachers in Minnesota.

Parent involvement course offerings also reflect differences among the state's colleges and universities. While every state university offers at least one course in parent involvement, such courses are less available at the University of Minnesota and at private colleges and universities. Only two of three University of Minnesota undergraduate teacher preparation programs and five of eighteen private college and university undergraduate teacher preparation programs have any courses focusing on parent involvement.

The Center agrees with research that shows the importance of parent involvement to improve the education of children. We believe that future teachers and administrators should study, interact with, and learn about parents as part of their preparation for the teaching profession.

Colleges and departments of education might experiment with various ways to offer courses on parent-educator cooperation. For example, a college might employ a teacher or administrator who has an outstanding record in this area, along with several parents who could offer insights and suggestion. Another option would be to arrange a "team-teaching" situation involving a college professor and an outstanding educator currently working in an elementary or secondary school.

We hope Minnesota's Board of Teaching and Higher Education Coordinating Board will consider this study. We also hope educators, businesses, parents and others concerned about student achievement will find this research useful.

Educators must have many skills. One of them is the ability to encourage and promote parent involvement. Students will learn more when parents and teachers become active partners.

References

Comer, James. "Educating Poor Minority Children," Scientific American. November 1988:42-48.

Elam, Stanley. "The Second Gallup Phi Delta Kappa Poll of Teachers' Attitudes Toward the Public Schools," Phi Delta Kappan. June 1989: 785-798.

Epstein, Joyce. "Teacher Attitudes, Parent Attitudes, and Parent Involvement in Inner City Elementary and Middle Schools, " CREMS newsletter (Center for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools), June 1989. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University.

Henderson, Ann, ed. Parent Participation-Student Achievement: The Evidence Continues to Grow. Columbia, MD: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

Walberg, Herbert. "Families as Partners in Educational Productivity," Phi Delta Kappan. February 1984: 397-400.

--------- "What do America's Teachers Really Want?" Instructor. January 1986

Appendix 1 Courses in Parent Involvement

	Total Courses	PI Courses	Special Education	ECFE Courses	Course Titles
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA - 17% of the state's total number of new teacher graduates in 1990*					
Duluth	1		X		Early Special Education Curricula
Morris	0				
Twin Cities	4	X			Parent Involvement in Bilingual Education
			X		Parent and Professional Planning for Handicapped Students
				X	Children and Parenting: Curriculum Methods and Materials
				X	Child Development and Parent Education
STATE UNIVERSITIES - 54% of the state's total number of new teacher graduates in 1990*					
Bemidji	1	X			Relations and Management in Early Childhood Education
Mankato	2	X			Teacher-Parent Relationships in the Education of the Child
			X		Counseling Parents of Children with Special Needs
Moorhead	4		X		Consultation in Special Education
			X		Assessment Strategies: Mildly Handicapped
			X		Teacher Communication/Consultation: Specific Learning Disabilit
			X		Advanced Planning Strategies: Mildly Handicapped
St. Cloud	4	X			Survey of Families and Parent Involvement
			X		Working with Families and Their Handicapped Children
				X	Practicum with Child and Family
				X	Parent and Family Education Methods
Southwest	2			X	Parent Education
				X	Practicum in Early Childhood
Winona	2	X			Socialization of the Young Child
				X	Practicum in Early Childhood/Family Educator-Parent Educator
PRIVATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES - 29% of the state's total number of new teacher graduates in 1990*					
Augsburg College	0				
Bethel College	0				
Carleton College	0				
College of Saint Benedict	0				
College of St. Catherine	0				
College of St. Scholastica	0				
Concordia College-Moorhead	1	X			Introduction to Early Childhood
Concordia College-St. Paul	2			X	Organization and Administration of Early Childhood Education
		X			Elementary Teaching Problems
Gustavus Adolphus	0				
Hamline University	0				
Macalester College	0				
North Central Bible College	0				
Northwestern College	1	X			The Education Profession
Saint John's University	0				
Saint Mary's College	1			X	Home-School Relations
Saint Olaf College	0				
St. Paul Bible College	3			X	Parent Education
				X	Student Teaching: Family Education
				X	Student Teaching: Parent Education
University of St. Thomas	0				

* Higher Education Coordinating Board. A Review of Minnesota Teacher Education Programs and the Labor Market for Teachers. 12/12/91. p 7

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

APPENDIX 2:
Courses related to Parent Involvement at Colleges and Universities in Minnesota

Note: Courses describing parenting, parent and family education, and early childhood education may, but do not necessarily address parent involvement in K-12 school settings. They are included in this listing, but are delineated separately under each institution since it is unclear what they contribute to promoting parent involvement in their childrens' K-12 education.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

University of Minnesota, Duluth

1991-93 Catalogue

SpEd5363 Early Special Education Curricula
Integration and adaptation of basic components of early childhood special education programs including assessment, IEP Development, standard and modified curricula, team and parent involvement, mainstreaming, and transitioning into a functional curricular plan. (4 credits)

University of Minnesota, Morris

1991-93 Catalog
None

University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

1990-92 Catalog

SeEd5220 Parent Involvement in Bilingual Education
Nature of parent and community involvement, role of family and community in education of language minority children; actualizing parent potential and participation in classrooms and schools. (2 credits)

EPsy5608 Parent and Professional Planning For Handicapped Students
Study and demonstration of constructive approaches to cooperative planning and implementation of education programs by parents, teachers, and persons involved with children who have special needs. (3 credits)

Courses referring to parents in their title or course descriptions:

HeEd3331 Children and Parenting: Curriculum Methods and Materials
Appropriate methods and materials for teaching concepts at the secondary and adult level. (2 credits)

HeEd5405 Child Development and Parent Education
Objectives, content, curriculum organization, teaching methods, materials, and evaluation approaches for teaching youth and adults about social, cultural, psychological, economic, and technical aspects of child development, parenting, and parent-child interactions. (1-4 credits)

STATE UNIVERSITIES

Bemidji State University

1990-92 Catalog

ED 367 Relations and Management in Early Childhood Education
Study and development of skills in relations with young children, parents, and co-workers. Guidance and group management techniques are addressed for working effectively with pre-kindergarten and young school age children. Experience in prekindergarten and school settings is part of the class. (4 credits)

Mankato State University

1990-92 Catalog

15:435 Teacher-Parent Relationships in Education of the Child
Emphasis on parent-teacher-child relationships for effective learning of children through the elementary grades. (4 credits)

69:440 Counseling Parents of Children With Special Needs
Role of special education teacher in counseling with parents. (3 credits)

Moorhead State University

1991-93 Catalog

SpEd364 Consultation in Special Education
Through exposure to related literature and simulation exercises, develop an understanding of the process and practice of consulting with teachers, parents, and children. (3 credits)

SpEd463 Assessment Strategies: Mildly Handicapped
Assessment of scholastic achievement and aptitude, social and adaptive behavior, and instructional effectiveness through the use of norm referenced individual test instruments and informal instructor designed procedures. Report writing, establishment of objectives, and participation with parents and teachers in the development of individual educational programs included. (3 credits)

SpEd475 Teacher Communication/Consultation: Specific Learning Disabilities
Theory and practice for special learning disabilities resource consultant including direct services, assessment and report writing, consultation with regular classroom teachers and working with parents of learners with handicaps. (4 credits)

SpEd571 Advanced Planning Strategies: Mildly Handicapped
Advanced instruction in observation, assessment, and interpretation of student performance including ability to observe, record, and analyze the learning environment and learning style of students and then involve students, parents, and mainstream professionals in meeting instructional goals. (3 credits)

St. Cloud State University

1989-91 Catalog

422 Survey of Families and Parent Involvement
In-depth study of parent-child relations, family development, parent involvement in their child's education process, development of student skills and sensitivities in understanding parent programs and working with parents in the home. (3 credits)

432 Working with Families and their Handicapped Children
Introduction to theories of family development, identifying the impact of special needs child and resulting family needs, emphasizing team strategies, support systems, resources, and advocacy. (3 credits)

Courses referring to parents in their title or course descriptions:

360 Practicum in Child and Family
Experimental practicum in setting with young children, their parents, and programs for parent education. (1-4 credit)

425-525 Parent and Family Education Methods
Methods for working with groups of parents and the study of different curricula in the field of Early Childhood and Family Education. (3 credit)

Southwest State University

1991-93 Catalog

Courses referring to parents in their title or course description:

435 Parent Education
This course examines various approaches to parent education. Adult development concepts will be the basis of planning a diversity of methods for working with parents and parent groups. Use of community services, child development theory, and child care guidelines will be discussed within the context of parent education programs. (4 credits)

460 Practicum in Early Childhood
Supervised practicum with children and adults in early childhood/family education program. (6 credits)

Winona State University

1991-93 Catalog

422G Socialization of the Young Child
Examines the child in the family, parent-child relations, home-school relations, and the social issues that impact on the family (3 credits)

Course that may include discussion of parent involvement in K-12 education:

440G Practicum in Early Childhood/Family Educator-Parent Educator
A supervised experience in adult education with parents of young children. (4 credits)

PRIVATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Augsburg College

1991-93 Catalog
None

Bethel College

1990-92 Catalog
None

Carleton College

1991-92 Catalog
None

College of Saint Benedict

1990-92 Catalog
None

College of St. Catherine

1990-92 Catalog
None

College of Saint Scholastica

1991-93 Catalogue
None

Concordia College - Moorhead

1991-92 Catalog

ED358 Introduction to Early Childhood
This course is designed for anyone interested in entering early childhood, kindergarten or lower-elementary grade teaching. It includes historical, philosophical and sociological aspects of early childhood education; an overview of contemporary issues, models and programs in early childhood; an examination of physical, socioemotional, cognitive, and language development; dimensions of work and play; importance in self-esteem and well-being of the child; parent-child-school relationships; and a look at international/comparative education as it relates to the young child. Open to junior and senior students only. (Half-course credit)

Concordia College - St. Paul

1991-92 Catalog

EDU449 Elementary Teaching Problems
Assuming the role of a classroom teacher in a simulated school situation, students are confronted with critical teaching problems involving student behavior, parent relations,

curriculum planning, teaching technology, classroom management, and evaluation of teaching and learning. Applying problem-solving techniques in the decision-making process, students recommend and support specific action in sharing sessions. (3 credits)

Course that may include discussion of parent involvement in K-12 education:

EDU426 The Organization and Administration of Early Childhood Education
This course, which is normally completed during the student teaching experience, deals with the following topics: the responsibilities of the early childhood director, supervision and evaluation of the staff, staff development, the budgeting and financial process, health maintenance and safety, parent involvement, and public relations. (2 credits)

Gustavus Aldophus College

1990-91 Catalog
None

Hamline University

1990-92 Catalog
None

Macalester College

1990-92 Catalog
None

North Central Bible College

1990-92 Catalog
None

Northwestern College, MN

1990-92 Catalog

EdU408 The Education Profession
Study of elementary and secondary teachers as professionals; current issues and decision-making in public and private education; legal rights and responsibility of children, parents, teachers, administrators, and school boards; professional organizations; parent-

teacher conferencing; establishment of positive home-school-community relations.(2 credits)

Saint John's University

1990-92 Catalog
None

Saint Mary's College

1990-92 Catalog

Course that may include discussion of parent involvement in K-12 education:

ED222 Home School Relations
The course is designed to allow students to develop good home-school relations skills and to enhance their abilities to reach out to the child and ultimately provide a warm, accepting learning environment. Knowing about the child and his/her family will allow the future teacher to understand the child's characteristics. (1 credit)

Saint Olaf College

1991-92 Catalog
None

St. Paul Bible College

1990-92 Catalog

Courses that may include discussion of parent involvement in K-12 education:

FCD 430 Parent Education
A study of parent education including adult learning methods and materials, parent education curriculum and methods, group facilitation, process and dynamics; and special needs children and families. (2 credits)

FCD 454 Student Teaching: Family Education
Teaching experience in an approved cooperating family education program. Prospective teachers observe, participate, and teach both parents and children under the supervision of selected cooperating teachers and a teacher education faculty member. (2 credits)

FCD 455 Student Teaching: Parent Education
Teaching experience in an approved cooperative family education program. Prospective teachers observe, participate, and teach parents under the supervision of selected cooperating teachers and a teacher education faculty member. (2 credits)

University of St. Thomas

1990-92 Catalog
None